

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13
ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00
EB-08 LAB-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /128 W
-----073874 011010Z /21

R 312005Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5802
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 06387

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ICFTU, ILO, PINT
SUBJ: ICFTU, WCL FAIL TO AGREE ON ILO GOVERNING BODY
ELECTIONS

REF: BRUSSELS 5349

1. THE SECRETARIATS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF
FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) AND THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF
LABOR (WCL) MET MARCH 22 TO DISCUSS, AT THE WCL'S REQUEST,
THE UPCOMING ELECTION OF WORKER MEMBERS OF THE ILO
GOVERNING BODY. ICFTU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY JOHN
VANDERVEKEN, WHO HAS BEEN OUT OF TOWN MOST OF THE TIME
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SINCE THE MARCH 22 MEETING, ON MARCH 31 PROVIDED THE USEC
LABOR ATTACHE THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE
ICFTU-WCL DISCUSSIONS.

2. PARTICIPANTS WERE GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN,
VANDERVEKEN, AND ENZO FRISO ON THE ICFTU SIDE AND
GENERAL SECRETARY JAN KULAKOWSKI, ASSISTANT GENERAL

SECRETARY GERARD FONTENEAU, AND GENEVA STAFFER GILLES
FRENETTE OF THE WCL.

3. KULAKOWSKI OPENED BY SAYING THAT THE WCL DELEGATION
WAS PURSUING ITS CONTACT WITH THE ICFTU IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE MANDATE LAID DOWN BY THE WCL CONGRESS IN BELGIUM LAST
OCTOBER. THE WCL SECRETARIAT, HE RECALLED, HAD ALREADY
MET, SINCE ITS CONGRESS, WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WORLD
FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU), THE
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNION UNITY (OATUU), AND THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS (ICATU).

4. THE WCL'S IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE WAS TO CORRECT WHAT
KULAKOWSKI DESCRIBED AS THE "UNREPRESENTATIVE" CHARACTER
OF THE WORKERS' GROUP OF THE ILO GOVERNING BODY. A
FEBRUARY 17 WCL LETTER (REFTEL) CONTAINED ITS PROPOSAL FOR
A "UNITARY" SLATE--WHAT THE WCL AT THAT TIME CONSIDERED
THE "BEST POSSIBLE" LIST--BUT SINCE THEN, AFTER
CONSULTATION WITH THE WFTU AND OTHERS, THE WCL HAD SOME
"AMENDMENTS" TO MAKE.

5. FOR EXAMPLE, ON ITS PROPOSED SLATE FOR DEPUTIES FROM
THE MIDDLE EAST, THE WCL HAD ORIGINALLY LISTED ONE ICFTU
CANDIDATE (PRESUMABLY HISTADRUT), AND ONE FROM THE ICATU;
THIS HAS BEEN CHANGED TO TWO ICATU CANDIDATES, NONE
FROM THE ICFTU. THE SLATE FOR TITULAR MEMBERS FROM AFRICA
AND THE MIDDLE EAST ORIGINALLY LISTED
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TWO FROM OATUU AND TWO FROM ICATU; THIS HAS BEEN CHANGED
TO THREE FROM OATUU AND ONE FROM ICATU.

6. KULAKOWSKI WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE WCL'S POSITION WAS
"FLEXIBLE," AND THAT THE WCL WAS WILLING TO
NEGOTIATE, BUT ON THE BASIS OF THE "CONCEPTS" IT HAD
OUTLINED IN ITS FEBRUARY 17 LETTER, WITH ITS GEOGRAPHICAL
AND IDEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWNS. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, THE
PURPOSE WOULD BE TO ACHIEVE A SINGLE WORKERS' SLATE, A
JOINT OATUU-WCL-WFTU-ICFTU LIST.

7. THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT THREW COLD WATER ON KULAKOWSKI'S
PROPOSAL, ACCORDING TO VANDERVEKEN. "WE TOLD THEM THAT
WE DIDN'T ACCEPT THEIR PROPOSALS IN WHOLE OR IN PART."
ONE OF THE ANOMALIES IN THE WCL'S PROPOSED SLATE, KERSTEN
POINTED OUT, WAS LUMPING JAPAN IN WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES.

8. THE ICFTU REPRESENTATIVES ALSO SAID THAT THE ICFTU
WAS IN THE PROCESS OF ASSEMBLING ITS OWN LIST OF
CANDIDATES FOR ILO GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS FROM THE WORKERS'
SIDE, AND LATER ON, AFTER ITS INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS ARE
COMPLETED, THE ICFTU MAY BE WILLING TO MEET WITH "PEOPLE

OF GOOD WILL" TO DISCUSS A POSSIBLE COMMON SLATE.
KULAKOWSKI WANTED TO KNOW WHEN AND WHERE, BUT KERSTEN
SAID, IN EFFECT, "DON'T CALL US--WE'LL CALL YOU." LATER,
WHEN THE MEETING WAS BREAKING UP, KULAKOWSKI SAID WITH
A HALF-SMILE, "THESE MEETINGS WITH THE ICFTU ARE BECOMING
MORE AND MORE FRUSTRATING."

9. AFTERWARDS, IN INTERNAL STRATEGY SESSION, THE ICFTU
SECRETARIAT CONCLUDED THAT IT SHOULD PHASE OUT ITS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 06387

USEEC

CONTACTS WITH THE WCL. "SINCE THE WCL HAS SO FEW MEMBERS
OF ITS OWN," SAYS VANDERVEKEN, "ITS RAISON D'ETRE NOW,
ITS ONLY CLAIM TO FAME, IS TO BE A BROKER BETWEEN THE
INTERNATIONAL GROUPS. IF WE DON'T TALK WITH THEM, THE
WCL WILL BE MUCH LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THE WFTU AND THE
OTHERS."

10. BY COINCIDENCE, SHORTLY AFTER ITS SESSION WITH

KULAKOWSKI, THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT HAD A MEETING WITH WIM KOK, PRESIDENT OF THE DUTCH FNV, WHO IS SOMETIMES MENTIONED AS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION. IN THE PAST YEAR, THE ICFTU HAS MAINTAINED FAIRLY CLOSE FRATERNAL RELATIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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THE WCL, REPORTEDLY AT KOK'S REQUEST, FOR FEAR OF UPSETTING THE MERGER THAT KOK'S FEDERATION IS EFFECTING WITH THE WCL AFFILIATE IN HOLLAND. BUT NOW, SAYS VANDERVEKEN, KOK AGREES WITH A STRATEGY OF DEFLATING THE WCL'S SELF-ASSUMED ROLE AS A POWER BROKER ON THE WORLD LABOR SCENE. MORRIS

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